



United States Department of Agriculture
National Agricultural Statistics Service

FARM LABOR



Cooperating with the Florida Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services
2290 Lucien Way, Suite 300, Maitland, FL 32751
407-648-6013 • (407-648-6029 FAX) • www.nass.usda.gov/fl

August 20, 2010

Florida

The total number of workers hired by farms and agricultural service operations during the survey week of July 11-17 was 37,000. Farms hired 35,000 workers, 15,000 less than last quarter and 1,000 less than last year. Agricultural service operations provided 2,000 workers, 4,000 less than last quarter and unchanged from last year.

For the survey week, high temperatures were in the mid 90s averaging one to two degrees above normal with scattered showers. The season for most of fruits and vegetables had ended in the State. Labor involving fruit, vegetables, and nurseries were seasonably low. Nursery and greenhouse workers accounted for 52% of the hired agricultural labor force, 3% less than that of last year. The decline in nursery and greenhouse sales contributed to hired worker numbers being below last year. According to AMS Market News data, 2.81 million pounds of non-citrus fruit and vegetables moved through the market during the reference week, down from the 100 million pounds in April. Data from the Citrus Administrative Committee reported a preliminary estimate of 57,000 boxes of citrus fruit harvested during the survey week, down from the 5.97 million boxes reported during the survey week from the previous quarter.

The average wage rate for workers hired by farms and agricultural service operations was \$10.76 per hour, up from both the \$10.29 reported last quarter and the \$10.52 from last year. Farmers paid an average of \$10.68 per hour, above the \$10.22 reported last quarter and the \$10.51 from last year. Agricultural service operations paid an average of \$11.95 per hour, above both last quarter's \$10.80 and the \$10.65 from last year.

United States

Hired Workers Down 1 Percent, Wage Rates Up 2 Percent From a Year Ago

There were 1,244,000 hired workers on the Nation's farms and ranches during the week of July 11-17, 2010, down 1 percent from a year ago. Of these hired workers, 894,000 were hired directly by farm operators. Agricultural service employees on farms and ranches made up the remaining 350,000 workers.

Farm operators paid their hired workers an average wage of \$10.82 per hour during the July 2010 reference week, up 16 cents from a year earlier. Field workers received an average of \$10.12 per hour, up 8 cents from last July, while livestock workers earned \$10.19 per hour compared with \$10.05 a year earlier. The field and livestock worker combined wage rate, at \$10.14 per hour, was up 10 cents from last year. The number of hours worked averaged 41.0 for hired workers during the survey week, up 3 percent from a year ago.

The largest decreases in the number of hired workers from last year occurred in the Lake (Michigan, Minnesota, and Wisconsin), Southern Plains (Oklahoma and Texas), Corn Belt I (Illinois, Indiana, and Ohio), Delta (Arkansas, Louisiana, and Mississippi), and Appalachian II (Kentucky, Tennessee, and West Virginia) regions. In the Lake, Corn Belt I, and Appalachian II regions, weather conditions were wetter than last year's reference week. Fieldwork progress was slowed for nearly two days in some areas, lowering the demand for hired workers. Heavy rains and flooding occurred in parts of Texas, halting most field activities and reducing the need for hired workers in the Southern Plains region. In the Delta region, declining demand from the nursery and greenhouse industries kept hired worker numbers below last year.

Continued on page 4

Florida All Hired Workers, Hours Worked, and Wage Rates by Type of Worker, with Comparisons

| Employer, year, and survey week | Number of hired workers | | | Number of hours worked | Wages paid by type of worker ¹ | | |
|---------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| | All | Expected to work | | | All | Field | Livestock |
| | | 150 days or more | 149 days or less | | | | |
| Hired by Farmers ² | (1,000) | (1,000) | (1,000) | (hours Per week) | (dollars per hour) | (dollars per hour) | (dollars per hour) |
| July 11 – 17, 2010 | 35 | 28 | 7 | 37.7 | 10.68 | 9.40 | 9.40 |
| April 11 – 17, 2010 | 50 | 41 | 9 | 37.2 | 10.22 | 9.10 | 10.00 |
| January 10 – 16, 2010..... | 48 | 43 | 5 | 37.1 | 10.84 | 9.60 | 10.35 |
| October 11 – 17, 2009..... | 46 | 41 | 5 | 38.6 | 10.65 | 9.30 | 10.10 |
| July 12 – 18, 2009..... | 36 | 32 | 4 | 37.3 | 10.51 | 9.14 | 9.50 |
| April 12 – 18, 2009 | 46 | 39 | 7 | 38.3 | 10.33 | 9.15 | 9.35 |
| January 11 – 17, 2009..... | 38 | 31 | 7 | 37.8 | 10.16 | 8.95 | 9.45 |
| October 12 – 18, 2008..... | 38 | 32 | 6 | 39.7 | 10.09 | 8.90 | 9.30 |
| July 6 – 12, 2008..... | 42 | 39 | 3 | 40.9 | 9.90 | 8.84 | 9.25 |
| Hired by Agricultural Services ³ | | | | | | | |
| July 11 – 17, 2010 | 2 | | | 46.0 | 11.95 | | |
| April 11 – 17, 2010 | 6 | | | 41.0 | 10.80 | | |
| January 10 – 16, 2010..... | 7 | | | 41.0 | 10.50 | | |
| October 11 – 17, 2009..... | 3 | | | 44.0 | 11.35 | | |
| July 12 – 18, 2009..... | 2 | | | 43.0 | 10.65 | | |
| April 12 - 18, 2009..... | 7 | | | 33.0 | 10.30 | | |
| January 11 - 17, 2009..... | 9 | | | 37.0 | 10.05 | | |
| October 12 – 18, 2008..... | 3 | | | 42.0 | 10.05 | | |
| July 6 - 12, 2008..... | 2 | | | 43.0 | 9.85 | | |
| Hired by Farmers & Agricultural Services | | | | | | | |
| July 11 – 17, 2010 | 37 | | | | 10.76 | | |
| April 11 – 17, 2010 | 56 | | | | 10.29 | | |
| January 10 – 16, 2010..... | 55 | | | | 10.79 | | |
| October 11 – 17, 2009..... | 49 | | | | 10.70 | | |
| July 12 – 18, 2009..... | 38 | | | | 10.52 | | |
| April 12 - 18, 2009..... | 53 | | | | 10.33 | | |
| January 11 - 17, 2009..... | 47 | | | | 10.14 | | |
| October 12 – 18, 2008..... | 41 | | | | 10.09 | | |
| July 6 - 12, 2008..... | 44 | | | | 9.90 | | |

¹ Includes all paid staff, supervisors, and field and livestock workers. Benefits, such as housing and meals, are provided to some workers but the values are not included in the wage rates.

² Excludes agricultural services workers.

³ Data are for agricultural services performed on the farm by custom service units. Blank data cells for these statistics are not included in the State-Regional tables.

Hired Workers by Farmers, Wage Rates, and Hours Worked, Selected States, with Comparisons

[Excludes Agricultural Service workers]

| Item | Florida | California | Texas & Oklahoma | Arizona & New Mexico | Hawaii | United States ¹ |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|----------------------|--------------------|----------------------------|
| | (1,000) | (1,000) | (1,000) | (1,000) | (1,000) | (1,000) |
| Hired workers | | | | | | |
| July 11–17, 2010 | 35 | 209 | 53 | 19 | 6 | 894 |
| April 11–17, 2010 | 50 | 140 | 55 | 18 | 6 | 737 |
| July 12–18, 2009 | 36 | 170 | 61 | 18 | 6 | 875 |
| Expected to work | | | | | | |
| 150 days or more | | | | | | |
| July 11–17, 2010 | 28 | 171 | 44 | 16 | 5 | 634 |
| April 11–17, 2010 | 41 | 120 | 45 | 16 | 5 | 585 |
| July 12–18, 2009 | 32 | 135 | 42 | 16 | 5 | 609 |
| 149 days or less | | | | | | |
| July 11–17, 2010 | 7 | 38 | 9 | 3 | 1 | 260 |
| April 11–17, 2010 | 9 | 20 | 10 | 2 | 1 | 152 |
| July 12–18, 2009 | 4 | 35 | 19 | 2 | 1 | 266 |
| | (hours per week) | (hours per week) | (hours per week) | (hours per week) | (hours per week) | (hours per week) |
| Hours worked by hired workers | | | | | | |
| July 11–17, 2010 | 37.7 | 44.6 | 44.0 | 44.6 | 37.8 | 41.0 |
| April 11–17, 2010 | 37.2 | 43.0 | 39.1 | 40.7 | 36.6 | 39.8 |
| July 12–18, 2009 | 37.3 | 45.6 | 39.5 | 45.4 | 37.4 | 39.7 |
| | (dollars per hour) | (dollars per hour) | (dollars per hour) | (dollars per hour) | (dollars per hour) | (dollars per hour) |
| Wages by type of worker ² | | | | | | |
| Field | | | | | | |
| July 11–17, 2010 | 9.40 | 10.20 | 8.98 | 9.70 | 12.00 | 10.12 |
| April 11–17, 2010 | 9.10 | 10.00 | 9.56 | 9.18 | 11.65 | 10.04 |
| July 12–18, 2009 | 9.14 | 10.10 | 8.94 | 10.09 | 11.60 | 10.04 |
| Livestock | | | | | | |
| July 11–17, 2010 | 9.40 | 11.20 | 9.54 | 9.69 | 14.20 | 10.19 |
| April 11–17, 2010 | 10.00 | 11.00 | 10.25 | 10.97 | 13.90 | 10.30 |
| July 12–18, 2009 | 9.50 | 11.30 | 9.72 | 10.94 | 13.60 | 10.05 |
| Field and livestock combined | | | | | | |
| July 11–17, 2010 | 9.40 | 10.34 | 9.20 | 9.70 | 12.19 | 10.14 |
| April 11–17, 2010 | 9.25 | 10.20 | 9.90 | 10.25 | 11.84 | 10.12 |
| July 12–18, 2009 | 9.20 | 10.30 | 9.30 | 10.38 | 11.81 | 10.04 |
| Hired worker wage rate | | | | | | |
| July 11–17, 2010 | 10.68 | 11.21 | 9.90 | 10.50 | 14.41 | 10.82 |
| April 11–17, 2010 | 10.22 | 11.11 | 10.30 | 11.10 | 13.99 | 10.82 |
| July 12–18, 2009 | 10.51 | 11.08 | 9.88 | 11.19 | 13.97 | 10.66 |

¹ Excludes Alaska.

² Benefits, such as housing and meals, are provided to some workers but the values are not included in the wage rates.

The largest increases in the number of hired workers from last year occurred in California, and in the Northern Plains (Kansas, Nebraska, North Dakota, and South Dakota), Corn Belt II (Iowa and Missouri), Appalachian I (North Carolina and Virginia), and Mountain II (Colorado, Nevada, and Utah) regions. Above normal winter precipitation in California allowed more acreage to be cropped due to increased availability of irrigation water. Therefore, more hired workers were needed. In the Northern Plains and Mountain II regions, weather conditions were drier than last year's reference week. This allowed field activities to progress rapidly and increased the need for hired workers. Strong demand from the cattle and poultry industries in the Corn Belt II region pushed hired worker numbers above last year. In the Appalachian II region, increased requirements from the tobacco, vegetable, and fruit industries kept hired worker levels above the previous year.

Hired worker wage rates were generally above a year ago in most regions. The largest increases occurred in the Northern Plains, Northeast II (Delaware, Maryland, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania), Corn Belt I, and Southeast (Alabama, Georgia, and South Carolina) regions. In the Northern Plains, Corn Belt I and Southeast regions, the higher wages were due to a lower proportion of part time workers. The higher wages in the Northeast II region were due to a larger percentage of higher paid equine workers.

Survey Methodology

Survey Procedures: These data were collected by the National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) during the last two weeks of July using sampling procedures to ensure every employer of agricultural workers had a chance of being selected. Two samples of farm operators are selected. First, NASS maintains a list of farms that hire farm workers. Farms on this list are classified by size and type. Those expected to employ large numbers of workers are selected with greater frequency than those hiring few or no workers. A second sample consists of segments of land scientifically selected from an area sampling frame. Each June, highly trained interviewers locate each selected land segment and identify every farm operating land within the sample segment's boundaries. The names of farms found in these area segments are matched against the NASS list of farms; those not found on the list are included in the Labor survey sample to represent all farms. This methodology is known as multiple frame sampling, with an area sample used to measure the incompleteness of the list. Additionally, a list of agricultural service firms was sampled in California and Florida. The survey reference week was July 11-17, 2010.

Reliability: Two types of errors, sampling and non-sampling, are always present in an estimate based on a sample survey. Both types affect the "accuracy" of the estimates. Sampling error occurs because a complete census is not taken. The sampling error measures the variation in estimates from the average of all possible samples. An estimate of 100 with a sampling error of 1 would mean that chances are 19 out of 20 that the estimates from all possible samples averaged together would be between 98 and 102; which is the survey estimate, plus or minus two times the sampling error. The sampling error expressed as a percent of the estimate is called the relative sampling error. The relative sampling error for number of hired workers at the U.S. level is normally less than 5 percent. The relative sampling error for the number of hired workers generally ranged between 10 and 20 percent at the regional level. The U.S. all hired farm worker wage rate had a relative sampling error of 0.8 percent. The relative sampling error was 0.8 percent for the combined field and livestock worker wage rate. Relative sampling errors for the all hired farm worker wage rate generally ranged between 2 and 6 percent at the regional levels. Relative sampling errors for wage rates published by type of farm and economic class of farm generally ranged between 2 and 20 percent at the regional level. Non-sampling errors can occur in a complete census as well as in sample surveys. They are caused by the inability to obtain correct information from each operation sampled, differences in interpreting questions or definitions, and mistakes in editing, coding or processing the data. Special efforts are taken at each step of the survey to minimize non-sampling errors.

Revision Policy: Farm labor information is subject to revision the following quarter that the information is published and the year after the original publication date. The basis for revision must be supported by additional data that directly affect the level of the estimate. Worker numbers and wage rates for April 2010 and July 2009 were subject to revision with this report.